

IN THE CLAIMS:

In line 1, delete "Patent Claims" and insert:

-- C L A I M S

What is claimed is: --

Please amend claims 1-19 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Spray~~ In a spray or hatch cover for boats, e.g., kayaks, having a pull element that is a circumferential elastic band provided at the edge of the cover for simple release of the cover at the collar (coaming) projecting above the boat body and surrounding the an aperture to be covered,

characterized in that the improvement wherein

the pull element is a tightening strap that ~~cannot~~ can be expanded by hand ~~(or only with great difficulty) by hand,~~ into which and wherein the pull element includes at least a one manually-operable tightening device ~~has been inserted~~ for tightening the strap.

2. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pull element includes two tightening devices ~~are inserted into~~ for tightening the tightening strap.

3. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a first tightening device is located at the a bow end of the spray cover in its attached position, and a second tightening device is located at the a stern end of the spray cover.

4. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, ~~2, or 3, characterized in that each~~ wherein the tightening device is a tensioner.

5. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one adjusting device is inserted into the tightening strap to adjust the length of the tightening strap.

6. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein each adjusting device includes a manually operable release mechanism for spontaneous extension or separation of the tightening strap.

7. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a first adjusting device is located at ~~the~~ a bow end of the spray cover in its attached position, and a second adjusting device is located at ~~the~~ a stern end of the spray cover.

8. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 1, ~~2, or 3, characterized in that each~~ wherein the tightening device is a pump clasp with a ratcheting strap working with it.

9. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 8, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, further comprising a release mechanism ~~is~~ provided on the upper side of the spray cover that is located in use position above the legs of the person sitting under the spray cover, and is actuated by raising the legs, and ~~that~~ provides an opening mechanism to at least one of the tightening ~~and/or~~ and adjusting devices provided.

10. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in Claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the release mechanism includes a release band connected at both ends to the spray cover,

which in use position of the spray cover lies somewhat oblique to the legs of the person seated under the spray cover and has practically no slack, whereby the spray cover may be stretched out oblique to its plane because of at least one of the elasticity of the material and/or and its dimensions that are greater than those of the aperture of the boat.

11. (Currently Amended) Spray cover as in Claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ further comprising a pull strap that extends to at least one of the tightening device or and adjusting device assigned to the opening mechanism and located at the a stern end of the spray cover.

12. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 11, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, further comprising an additional rubber cord that is stretchable by hand is provided for prior positioning of the cover on the coaming.

13. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the rubber cord is stitched to the edge of the cover.

14. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 13, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, wherein the tightening strap is held within a hollow cavity at the edge of the cover.

15. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~Claims 13 and 14, characterized in that~~ Claim 12, wherein the rubber cord is held by the seam that forms ~~the~~ a hollow cavity at the edge of the cover.

16. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in Claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one of the rubber cord ~~or~~ and tightening strap is shaped as a tube in whose interior the tightening strap ~~or~~ and the rubber cord, respectively, extends.

17. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 13, characterized in that~~ Claim 12, wherein the rubber cord is held within a series of loops or rings at the edge of the cover.

18. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 17, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, further comprising a shaped piece is inserted into the spray cover

in use position between the tightening device and the coaming, and whose shape is matched on the one side to the contour of the coaming, and on the other side to the shape of the tightening device.

19. (Currently Amended) Spray or hatch cover as in ~~one of Claims 1 through 17, characterized in that~~ Claim 1, wherein the shape of the rear side of the tightening device matches the shape of the coaming.